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Letter dated 11 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I transmit to you herewith a letter dated 11 March 2003 from Mr. Naji Sabri, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning attempts by the United States to provoke a crisis by means of an unauthorized U-2 spy plane flight.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed A. **Aldouri**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 11 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) addressed a letter dated 7 March 2003 to our Permanent Representative in New York notifying the Iraqi side of the flights of the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft during the period from 1600 hours on 10 March 2003, United States Eastern Standard Time, to 1600 hours on 12 March 2003.

On 8 March 2003, our Permanent Representative in New York addressed a letter to Mr. Blix informing him that we had received the flight notification.

At 0940 hours Iraq time on 11 March 2003 the high-altitude aerial reconnaissance plane entered Iraqi airspace via the point of entry specified in Mr. Blix's letter (N2G-37 E047-00), in other words the Batin area on the Iraq-Kuwait border. Twenty minutes after the entry of the U-2 high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft into Iraqi airspace, another identical U-2 aircraft entered at a point on the border between Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

Inasmuch as, in violation of the procedure in force, no prior notification of the entry of the second aircraft was given, and in view of the danger that this entails for the aircraft and the pilot, Major-General Husam Muhammad Amin, Director General of the National Monitoring Directorate, contacted Mr. Miroslav Gregoric, Director of the Baghdad Ongoing Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Centre (BOMVIC), requesting an explanation. Mr. Gregoric replied that both were UNMOVIC aircraft and that an error had occurred and would be dealt with. The two aircraft left Iraqi airspace.

The serious act committed by the United States in sending a U-2 spy plane into Iraqi airspace without prior notification, while knowing in advance the possible dangers to the aircraft and the pilot, confirms that the United States is still resorting to cheap tactics, even exposing the life of its pilots to danger, in order to precipitate a crisis to justify aggression against Iraq and the region.

I therefore request the United Nations, the Security Council and UNMOVIC to take the necessary steps to prevent such dangerous transgressions at this grave and sensitive juncture.

(*Signed*) Naji **Sabri**
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq